

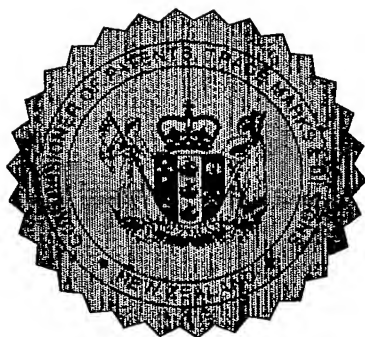
CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued in support of an application for Patent registration in a country outside New Zealand pursuant to the Patents Act 1953 and the Regulations thereunder.

I hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional Specification as filed on 3 April 2002 with an application for Letters Patent number 518124 made by Schem NZ Limited.

Dated 23 April 2003.

Neville Harris
Commissioner of Patents

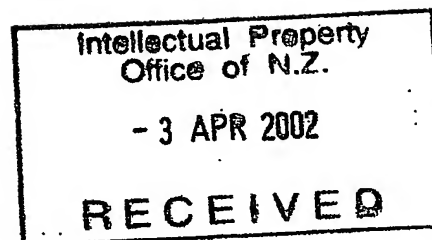


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518124



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NEW ZEALAND
PATENTS ACT 1953

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO REMOTE MONITORING SYSTEMS

We, SchemNZ Limited, a New Zealand company of 26 Brassey Road, Wanganui, New Zealand do hereby declare this invention to be described in the following statement:

The general field of this invention is in apparatus for use in remote monitoring systems. More specifically, the invention relates to remote sensing and monitoring equipment wherein the front-end equipment is substantially carried by a front line operative.

There is a clear need for equipment for the purposes of recording the sights, sounds and other interactions experienced by personnel such as police officers, ambulance officers and the like. Similar equipment is useful in situations like the external inspection of large buildings, and the internal inspection of large storage tanks and pipelines. Existing equipment designed and used for inspection activities is generally impractical for use by police officers and the like in everyday use.

The ability to interact in real time with the front line operator in circumstances such as ambulance and police officers find themselves in every day would be a significant advantage. The ability to supplement the on the ground abilities of an officer with real time access to specialist advice would greatly enhance the operational capabilities of such personnel. Similarly, in the industrial environment having the ability for a front line operator, such as a maintenance person, or lower skilled process work, to take instructions in real time from a specialist adviser able to interact remotely but directly with them would greatly improve operational efficiencies. It is an object of the present invention to provide a system and equipment to at least go some way towards providing these abilities.

In its broadest embodiment the present invention provides apparatus for use in remote monitoring, the apparatus including a video capture means, a audio pick up means, a transmitter means to transmit the captured video and audio signals and transmit them to a remote location, the apparatus being characterised in that it further includes a mounting means on which the video capture means, the audio pick up means, and the transmitter are mounted, with the mounting means being configured and arranged to be wearable on the head of an operator, the

apparatus also further including an electromagnetic radiation shield mounted in the mounting means adjacent the head of the wearer to protect them from electromagnetic radiation.

Preferably the electromagnetic radiation shield comprises a metal mesh screen shaped to conform to a wearer's head shape.

Conveniently the mesh screen can form the mounting means.

Optimally the apparatus is built into a hat, cap, or brim-ring to facilitate wearability. The hat or cap may be of rigid, semi-rigid, or soft construction.

Preferably the audio pick up comprises a microphone. The microphone can be configured and oriented to predominantly pick up audio from the wearer, in which case a further microphone can be included to pick up background or surroundings audio signals.

Optionally the apparatus can further include an audio receiver to enable a wearer to receive audio based instructions or advice from a remote assistant or adviser.

The apparatus can optionally also further include a video receiver and screen. Preferably in such a case the video screen would be mounted on an adjustable boom which can position the screen in front of the wearer's eye.

It will be appreciated that a significant advantage of the present invention as outlined above is that it provides a front line operator with a head-carried apparatus establishing a telepresence for an observer remote from the front-end site.

Optionally the apparatus can include a light means to facilitate recordal of video in low light conditions.

Preferably the apparatus also includes a power supply mounted adjacent the mounting means, although equally the power supply can be mounted, for example, on a belt loop or the like and connected via cable to power the apparatus components.

Desirably the apparatus further includes a power supply switch to enable the supply of electrical power to the apparatus to be switched on or off.

Preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

- Figure 1:** Shows a cut away side elevation of an apparatus according to the present invention;
- Figure 2:** Shows an opposite side cut away side elevation of an apparatus according to figure 1;
- Figure 3:** Shows a cut away side elevation of an alternative embodiment of the present invention; and
- Figure 4:** Shows a rear elevation of the apparatus of figure 3.

As show in the drawings, the present invention provides a head mounted apparatus 1 for use in remote monitoring. Preferably the apparatus 1 is built into a cap 100, as shown in figures 1 and 2, or a brim cap arrangement 200 as shown in figures 3 and 4.

The apparatus 1 includes a video capture means 2 in the form of an analogue or digital video camera, a audio pick up means 3 in the form of an analogue or digital microphone, and at least one transmitter means 4 to transmit the captured video and audio signals and transmit them to a remote location. In some cases it may be desirable to have two transmitters, one each for the video and audio signals.

The apparatus 1 further includes a mounting arrangement 5 on which the video camera 2, the microphone 3, and transmitter(s) 4 are mounted. The apparatus 1 also further includes electromagnetic radiation shielding 6 to protect a wear from electromagnetic radiation generated by the transmitter(s) 4. Optimally the electromagnetic shielding 6 forms the mounting arrangement 5 for the various other components.

Referring to figures 1 and 2, in the embodiment shown the electromagnetic radiation shield 6 comprises a metal mesh screen shaped to conform to a wearer's head shape. The mesh screen 6 is built into the hat 100 to facilitate wearability. The hat or cap 100 can be of rigid, semi-rigid, or soft construction. For example in the case of police or ambulance officers the cap 100 has both rigid and flexible aspects.

In its simplest incarnation, the apparatus 1 incorporates a video camera/transmitter 2/4 set that sends a one-way video signal that may be viewed live or recorded. The video signal may incorporate an audio signal fed from the microphone 3.

Alternatively the apparatus 1 can include a separate microphone/audio transmitter 3/4 and/or an audio receiver/earpiece 7/8. This will provide: no-audio, one-way audio or two-way audio options. If a separate microphone 3 is included it may be placed directly on the apparatus 1 or mounted on an adjustable boom 9.

The apparatus 1 can also include a video receiver/video screen 10/11. The video screen 11 can be mounted on an adjustable boom 12 so as to position the video screen 11 directly in front of the eye 301 of the wearer 300. In low light conditions it can be helpful to include a light source 13 to facilitate recordal of video, although the video camera 2 itself should optimally be operable in low light conditions without such assistance.

The microphone 3 can be configured and oriented to predominantly pick up audio from the wearer 300, in which case a further microphone 14 can be included to pick up background or surroundings audio signals.

The apparatus also requires a power supply 15. For maximum convenience this should be mounted in the cap 100 or brim-ring 200, although equally the power supply 15 can be mounted, for example, on a belt loop or the like (not shown) and connected via cable to power the apparatus components. An electrical power supply switch 16 to enable the supply of electrical power to the apparatus 1 to be switched on or off is also optimal.. This should be located for convenient activation.

The embodiment of the invention shown in figures 3 and 4 incorporates substantially the same features as the embodiment of figures 1 and 2. Whereas the cap 100 of figures 1 and 2 is intended primarily for use by the likes of police and ambulance officers, the embodiment of figures 3 and 4 has particular application in the food or dairy industries, where hygiene is a significant issue. The brim-ring 200 design allows the apparatus 1 to be worn over the top of a single use hygiene cap 201. The components of the apparatus 1 are then hygienically sealed within a washable housing.

Advantages of the invention are numerous. These include the ability to provide support for someone installing, commissioning, maintaining or repairing equipment at a remote (even international) site immediately without time loss by travel. The support is in the form of an expert who can provide direct supervision and instructions to an operator at the remote site.

This provides full coverage of electrical, electronic and mechanic faults - normally taking an 80% share - and allows creating over distance innovative solutions, in utilising available on-board means in conferencing with all experts, instead of depending on stocked plug out, plug in solutions previewed, which is particularly difficulty with large scale mechanical equipment.

The present invention is ideally suited to integration with an number of other sub-systems. These can include:

- Remote communications systems to carry the video and sound to the Expert and back to the Operator
- A sensor network to measure equipment variables and relay them to the expert's site.
- Software to predict when failures are expected by using this information on the equipment.
- Simulation software to provide auditing tools for designs before they are implemented on a site.
- A Logbook of previous events that have occurred in the life of the equipment acted on.
- Manuals documenting the as built status
- As well of procedures for installing, commissioning, maintaining and repairing/replacing equipment.
- A human Expert to upgrade the local skills, being familiar with the type of equipment in question, usually as a result of supplying and supporting the equipment in a number of different places.

Additional advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art after considering the principles in particular form as discussed and illustrated.

Accordingly it will be appreciated that changes may be made to the above described embodiments of the invention without departing from the principles taught herein. For example, where in the foregoing description reference has been made to integers or components having known equivalents then such equivalents are herein incorporated as if individually set forth.

Finally therefore it will be understood that the invention is not limited to the particular embodiment described or illustrated, but is intended to cover all

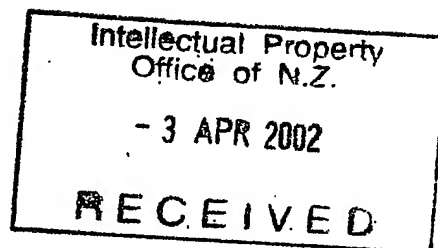
alterations or modifications which are within the scope of the broadest aspects disclosed.

SchemNZ Limited

by its attorneys

PETER VERBOEKET AND COMPANY

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Verboeket', written over a horizontal line.

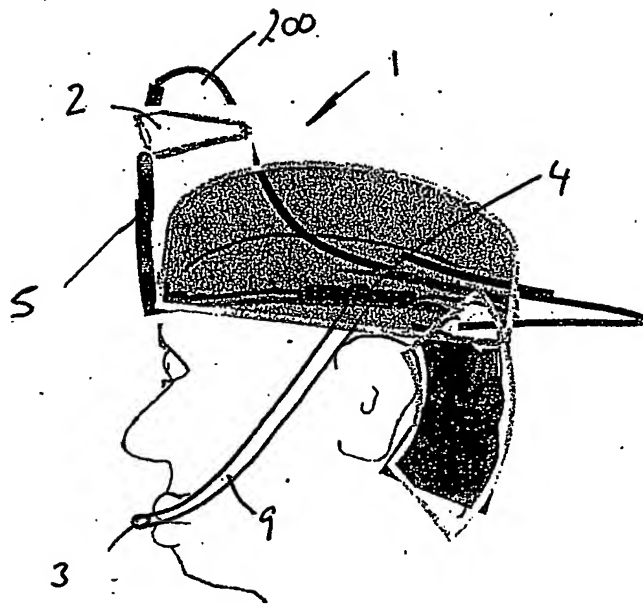


Figure 3

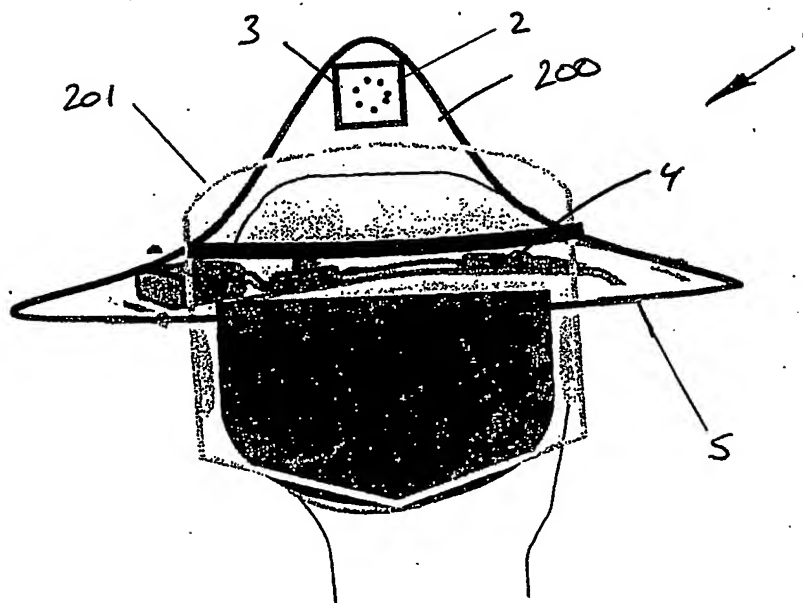


Figure 4

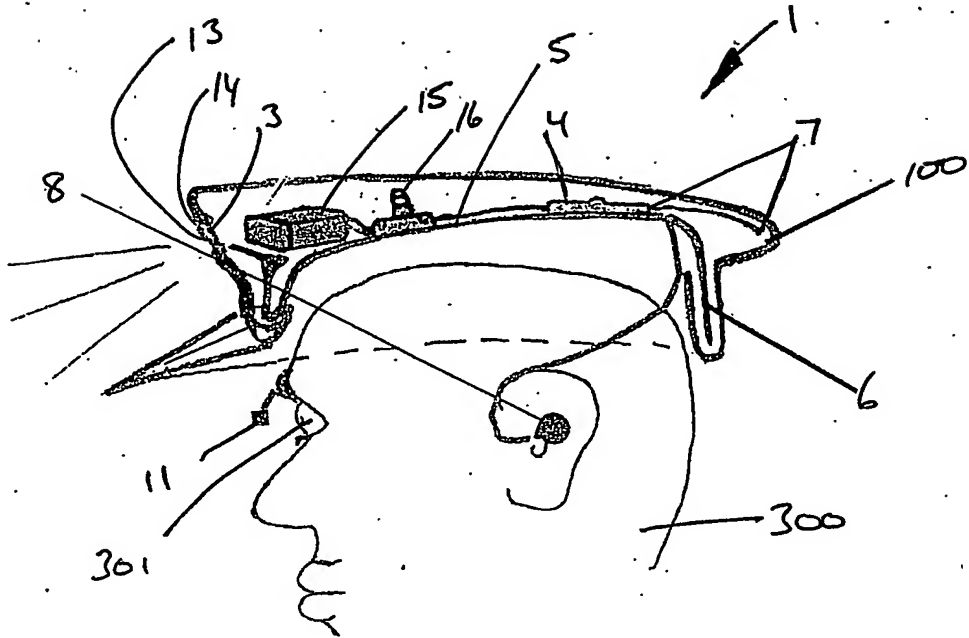


Figure 1

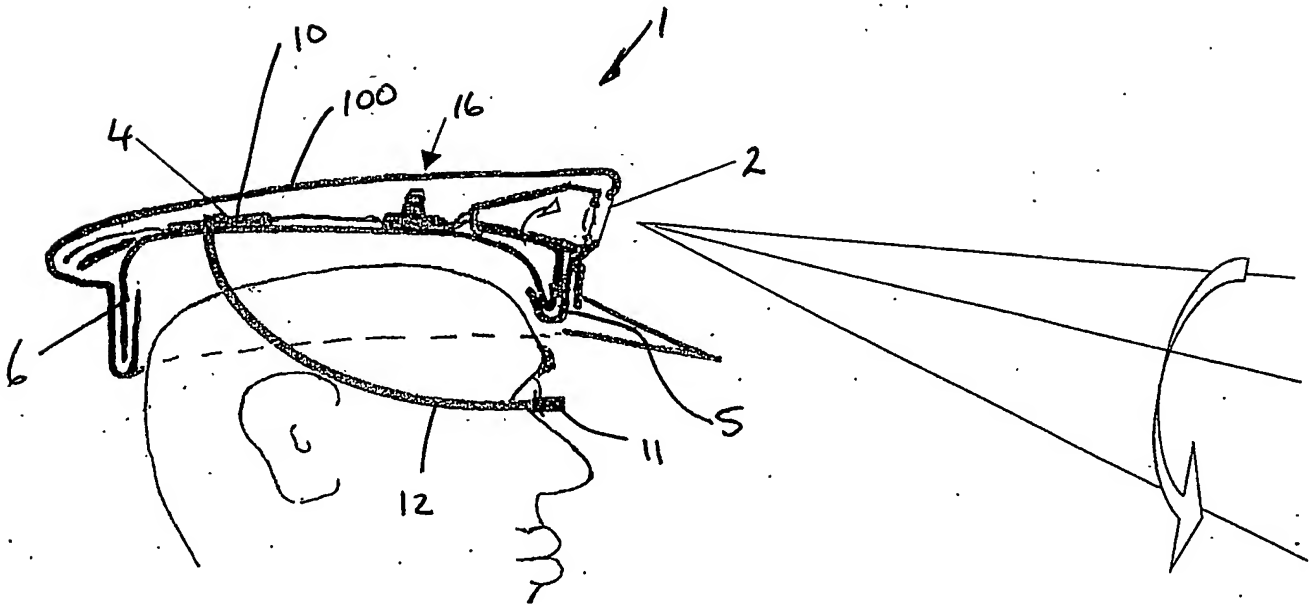


Figure 2

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